

those fleeing desperate situations in far-off places. On all of these issues and so many more, it has been an honor to represent the great State—the greatest State—of Vermont in the U.S. Senate.

I am going to have more to say about the challenges, the rewards, and, I am afraid, some disappointments over the last 46 years at a later time. Now I want to celebrate the accomplishments that, together with my constituents, we have achieved for Vermont over the last decades.

I want to recognize the work still to do this year in Congress.

I want to thank the unbelievably wonderful women and men on my staff and my staff throughout the years. They have steadfastly stood by me in our shared goals to deliver for Vermonters and for Vermont and for the country.

I want to thank my family—my children, grandchildren, my parents, and Marcelle's parents who were here with me to start this journey in the first Senate election who I know watch over the entire Leahy family today. I think of how my immigrant grandparents and great-grandparents and Marcelle's immigrant parents, how they must feel if they are looking down.

And, of course, Marcelle, my closest friend, my partner. The last couple of years have been challenging in ways we could never have imagined. But she was with me from the first moment of the first campaign, and we made our decision together and decided it is time to go back home.

Now, we both look forward to the hard work the coming year will bring with the same conviction that brought us to Washington in the first place; that the brighter horizons of tomorrow hold the hope of the future and the privilege I feel to serve in this body and trying to guide our wonderful country toward the future.

As I said, I will speak more about this later, but, Mr. President, I thank my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, President Biden and his team flew to Glasgow for a glitzy conference. World leaders traveled there to attend one another's speeches on carbon emissions and climate.

The world's largest emitter was not there. China pumps out more than one-quarter of the entire world's emissions, but President Xi didn't bother to at-

tend this conference. Putin didn't show up either. He and his cronies in Moscow are too busy using Russia's natural gas to stranglehold the energy and make energy hostages out of our European friends who rushed too naively toward renewables.

This goes to the core problems with the anti-energy agenda that liberal elites want to thrust on our country—maximum self-inflicted pain for American families in exchange for no meaningful global gains.

They would have America tie one hand behind our back while our competitors and adversaries keep right on going. This hurts families and helps China.

Across the country, working families are already worrying about the big, potentially historic spikes in energy costs and heating bills that are headed their way. Here is the New York Times headline from last week: "Winter Heating Bills Loom as the Next Inflation Threat."

Futures contracts for home heating fuels have skyrocketed in price. Natural gas users have just about doubled from last year. For heating oil and propane, it is actually even worse. Our colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee are holding a hearing this morning on rising heating costs.

In Kentucky, where about 4 in 10 households are heated by natural gas, families are about to get slammed. Even more Kentucky families rely on straight electricity for their heat, and, in our State, more than two-thirds of our electrical power comes from coal. Coal literally keeps the lights on, and it keeps the cold out.

That is why the original Obama-Biden War on Coal hits States like Kentucky so very hard and why the even more radical sequel the Democrats are planning next would fall on the heartland like a ton of bricks.

The President's special envoy for climate issues John Kerry says:

[Y]ou have to phase down coal before you can end coal.

One of the President's nominees to the Treasury Department has admitted that small producers of affordable American energy "are going to probably go bankrupt in short order."

American families are staring down the barrel of skyrocketing heating bills, and the Democrats' response is to go to war against affordable American energy. The reckless taxing-and-spending spree they are writing behind closed doors and want to pass in a matter of weeks would spend hundreds of billions of dollars on Green New Deal-type policies that would saddle families with even higher prices and make our Nation even more dependent on Russia and the Mideast.

Of course, energy inflation is just one part of the huge inflation crisis that Democrats have unleashed. According to reports in one new survey, 90 percent of Americans are either somewhat concerned or very concerned about in-

flation and rising costs. Nine out of ten households are hurting. Sixty-seven percent of the country, two-thirds, say Washington needs to stop printing and spending so much and driving prices even higher.

Energy bills and gas prices are just one corner of this inflation crisis, but Democrats seem to want to ignore the people, plow ahead, and spend trillions more.

Even liberal economists who like the Democrats' reckless taxing-and-spending spree because they agree with the far-left transformation admit it would make inflation even worse next year.

There is no part of our economy that can afford another massive dose of socialism, but Democrats are specifically targeting American energy to get hit especially hard. They are planning direct new taxes, new fees, and new regulatory mandates for energy producers. They want to make affordable, reliable energy artificially expensive to force Americans toward the less affordable, less reliable forms of energy that elite liberals would rather they use. It would hurt families badly; it would help China in a big way. That is because the Biden administration doesn't have any strategic plan to snap its fingers and turn our massive country into some green utopia overnight. They just want to throw boatloads of government money at things like solar panels and electric vehicles and hope it all works out. But China absolutely dominates the supply chains for lithium batteries, for solar panels, and for practically all the fashionable purchases into which Democrats want to dump all this money. In all likelihood, Democrats' supposedly green agenda would just provide a massive one-way gift to our adversary, the world's No. 1 emitter, the Chinese Communist Party.

This isn't Build Back Better; it is Build Back Beijing. Here is just one example: There is a raw material called polysilicon that is crucial for solar panels. According to the New York Times, more than 80 percent of the entire world's supply comes from China. About half of the world's supply comes from the Xinjiang Province, where China is brutalizing the Uighur minority with tactics that include forced labor.

There are other key resources, including critical minerals, where China has similar strangleholds. Here are some recent headlines:

"Lithium Shortage May Stall Electric Car Revolution and Embed China's Lead."

"China's lithium companies are in an investment frenzy."

Just like liberal policies are hostile to the American energy we produce here at home, they are also hostile to exploring for these critical minerals here at home. Their massive proposal is backed with anti-hard rock mining provisions that would make it even harder to stand up American supply chains for critical minerals.